

I believe that everyone is beautiful, perhaps not as beautiful as the models and celebrities that grace the covers of magazines. I believe that everyone is beautiful inside.

To me, true beauty is something that takes time to discover. It rewards those willing to do the work, to look past the superficial and unearth, as a diamond is, the inner realms of each individual. Unlike surface beauty, inner beauty requires the cultivation of time. The loud and shallow will not achieve this precious pinnacle. It takes more than the sort of aggressive confidence much admired these days, often displayed by celebrities and other superficially attractive persons.

Inner beauty does not necessarily translate into physical beauty. Yet people sometimes take appearances as the window to the soul, prejudging character before acquaintance. These silly assumptions irk me. Although our beauty may not be instantly visible at a glance, we should not be judged merely by the eye without giving our heart a chance to feel.

My father once showed me a photograph on the Internet. It was an old lady. She didn't look pretty. If I had seen her on the streets, I would probably have ignored her completely because she looked that ordinary and plain. My father told me that that very lady had donated a thousand dollars to help the victims of a natural disaster that happened a few years back. However, what truly shocked me was not her age – which was after all a mere double digit that told no more about her than mine tells strangers.

She sold tissue packets for a living. It had not simply been an old lady who donated that one thousand dollars, it had been a tissue lady; someone people wouldn't give a second glance to after waving her away, someone insignificant to the majority of the public.

My father told me that the thousand dollars that she had donated had been almost all of her savings, accumulated from the drips and drabs that she had collected over the years.

I cannot imagine that a lady like her could do something so grand and so generous. I cannot visualize myself doing a similar thing.

That day, I truly realized what it means to be beautiful. I can vividly remember the movie line by Shrek: 'Ogres are like onions.' I believe that humans are onions too. We have layers. The first layer grows rough, grows aged and crumpled with time, while the inner layers are contrary – they grow purer, grow whiter with time's cultivation.

That tissue lady, she was not what one could call beautiful in terms of appearances. Yet deep within her was beauty – generosity, kindness, a self-sacrificing spirit.

Everyone is beautiful inside; it's just a matter of whether people are observant enough to see that beauty, whether they are sensible enough to give others chances to let their beauty shine through before making judgment.

Everyone is beautiful inside. This I truly do believe.